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No. 1.

October, 1911.

THE MYSTIC, THE CHURCH AND THE WORLD,

BY

REV. G. W. ALLEN,

Vicar of Bretby,

Editor of "The Seeker."

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1911

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THE MYSTIC, THE CHURCH AND THE WORLD.

I HAVE for a long time desired an opportunity of discussing, with intelligent students of mysticism, certain ideas which seem to me of primary importance to the world in its attempts to solve its pressing problems, and which have been suggested to me from the study of the old German mystic, Jacob Boehme. I live a very secluded life in a small country village, where folks all know more about turnips, and breeds of cattle, than about the mystical concept of life; and—under such circumstances—there is danger of growing into a mere theorist: a thing I have always dreaded. Moreover—if I may make one small boast—I am, I venture to think, just the one to suggest safely such ideas as I have to lay before you. For I am a man comparatively unknown and insignificant; and if what I say is to convince anybody, it will have to be through its inherent reasonableness. Had I been a Bishop, or even an Archdeacon, I should have before my eyes the fear that I might let slip some opinion which might cause the utmost consternation, and become the centre of a raging and furious controversy. I am glad therefore to be a sort of moral ‘Ben Gunn,’ of whom those who dislike my opinions can say, “Why nobody minds Ben Gunn, dead

or alive nobody minds him." I am aware that many who call themselves 'mystics' will not agree with my view of mysticism : for 'mysticism' is—outside certain conservative circles—a name to conjure with, and is adopted by very many who seek to tickle the ears of modern Athenians by telling some new thing ; often of no practical use towards helping to solve the social problems of the time.

For the past thousands of years the world has been trying to raise the fruits of co-operation from the seeds of competition : and the mystic at all events is not surprised that it has failed : because a corrupt tree cannot bring forth good fruit. Going back to basal principles, we must recognise that man needs a stimulus, and the world can see no stimulus other than competition, and such competition as alone it understands, which is for things of such a nature that the supply is limited, and therefore characterised by the Duchess's dictum, "The more there is of mine, the less there is of yours." I think that this can only be accounted for by supposing that certain very real things have got, in some way, hidden from the world ; and that its idea of reality, of the actual Fact, has been formed on a very partial apprehension of that Fact ; and is practically a false imagination. But if this be so, the problem must be rather to restore

the true imagination, than to doctor up the false in the hope that thus we may persuade it to yield the same results as the true would yield.

And herein arises a principle, the importance of which I do not think can be exaggerated. As I read the ancient wisdom books of India I seem to find therein an agreement with the Christian truth that the seen, the surface of things, is delusion, 'maya;' but also the suggestion that there is *no relationship at all* between the false and the true. Whereas I believe that there is—and must necessarily be—a relationship, but that that relationship, is one of exact reversal. Now reversal is a relationship, and from the study of what I know is the reverse of the true, I can arrive at a fairly accurate idea of what is true. Theoretically, perhaps, of little value, the idea becomes practically of all important value to me when I want to do more than theorise, when I want to begin practical operation to discover the true. That some can evolve the true from their own inner consciousness, I do not deny: but some check on this intuitive process is certainly desirable: and I feel very much more confident that my conclusion from inner consciousness is right, when I find it agrees with the conclusion I should come to from reversing the appearances of things. St. Paul, dividing

the whole phenomena, of surface apprehension and spiritual perception, into two classes, calls these two, 'the mind of the flesh,' and 'the mind of the spirit:' and adds, "and these are contrary the one to the other."

St. Paul is content to state the fact: Boehme undertakes to show that it must be so in reason; that, of the two, judgements arrived at in the full light and view of all the facts, and judgements arrived at in darkness—in which the imagination has full swing, because no facts are seen to check it—the latter must be the contrary of the former.

I cannot—in the space at my disposal—give anything like a full account of Boehme's wonderful doctrine of origins; I must be content to give certain great, basal principles which very definitely touch on our subject.

Manifestation involved the putting forth of the infinite content of 'the All' into individual manifestations as 'the each.' For the abstract Being side, only one Power is requisite, but when manifestation is to be accomplished, the arising of a contrary to this one is necessary.

But how can a contrary arise in the One? Boehme suggests that this One never was the one of singularity, but of unity. The unity was apparently broken; and whereas, before, that unity had been made up of the exactly right part hidden and the exactly

right part manifested, now what had been hidden became manifested. The two first Forms of Nature, out of which practically the other five came, are two contrary wills; one of which he calls Harshness, and the other, Attraction: and for which I have suggested the terms Homogeneity and Heterogeneity: or Stability and Instability.

As soon as this second will arose, evil became a possible, but not a necessary, eventuality. Boehme is very bold, and very paradoxical; and seems to suggest that evil is always possible, even in God; only that—in God—the possibility is never realised, and cannot even be so much as thought of as to be realised. But what God cannot think of doing—being too wise ever to do it—man can, not seeing as God sees the whole of the consequences of doing it. In fact, the whole distinction arises, not from a creation by God, and counter-creations by an evil deity, as Zarathustra thought, but from the different operations of different orders of consciousness, the divine-perfect, and the human-limited. The former is One; the latter is of an infinite series of degrees from closest approximation to the One, down to that of the most extreme ignorance. This ignorance is, says Boehme, produced by the darkness; which itself is produced by an eye, or cognising faculty, which cannot bear the full light.

Further considerations throw additional light and suggestiveness on this explanation. I am old-fashioned enough not to reject entirely the story of how evil first arose, given in Gen. II and III. No doubt the teaching is veiled in allegory; but the main principles are plain. We read that when God had first made man, He pronounced him, and all the previous works, 'very good.' This goodness we must understand of merely structural perfection. The eye of God sees the end in the beginning; our eye does not. Before structural perfection can pass into its full realisation, much more than structural perfection is required. I like to use the illustration of the man and the violin. The man may be structurally perfect, and the violin may be structurally perfect: the man may have all his nerves and muscles structurally there, and the violin may be quite rightly and skillfully made. And yet the first time the structurally perfect man tries to play on the structurally perfect instrument, he will not play perfectly.

For it is another great, general principle that man gets more joy and delight from a perfection he has had some hand in creating, than from a perfection given to him complete at once, and in which he has had no hand as a worker together with God. Otherwise he would be a mere machine, and not a self-

conscious, personal 'self.' Two laws govern the attainment of the fullest conscious delight: first, that man must have had some hand in producing it; and secondly, that he must have had an experience of a contrary. Boehme indeed is bold enough to suggest that manifestation itself may have been brought about for this reason, that God might, in His creatures, enter into an experience He could never have had in Himself; this very experience of a contrary. For it is ever to be remembered that all that is requisite to this experience is a consciousness; and even if I only seem to myself to experience a contrary—though no contrary could ever really *be*—enough is done to work high appreciation of that state to which the contrary is contrary. So that a man who had never known want—if he dreamt he was poor, and miserable because poor, he would when he waked have a higher realisation of the good of his real state of abundance than he had before.

We are told that God never changes, nor alters what He has really made. Now it does not follow from this that no alteration at all is possible, but only that it can only take place in a false imagination. Really, nothing can change but a false imagination; for how should the real change, or who would ever want to change it?

But how can a false imagination arise?

We have only to think of our dreams to find the answer. The dreamer is perhaps a man, lying on his bed in his own house; possibly his wife by his side, and his children in an adjoining room. But for the time being he is in a state of consciousness in which none of these real facts are represented. He may be far away, undergoing dangers and difficulties. It may not be easy to explain exactly how such a state of consciousness comes to be; but we have the clearest of evidence that it is possible. The dream-consciousness is characterised by this: that the real facts of environment are hidden, and in their place arises a new series of facts, formed largely by imagination, in which—no doubt—some instinctive operation of the real facts, and the general order of things associated with them, plays some small part. The *things* of the dream are usually like those of waking life, but the *relationships*, the happenings, are quite unlike waking life. Possibly some of the higher centres of the brain are—in dream—temporarily out of gear: certainly something has gone into a hiddenness, for the time being, which—if operatively there—would prevent us from accepting many of the happenings of the dream as possible.

The mind is so constituted that it must have ideas. If the real facts are seen, the ideas will be formed from them: but if—

through some limiting of cognition—they are not seen, still the mind will form ideas, only in this case they will be formed by fancy. There is therefore a true imagination and a false : and the worst of it is that the false never bears conscious witness to its insufficiency. Thus the imagination is creative, creating for us our idea of environment. Fancy only works when there are really no facts visible to us ; and what it thus creates it regards as the facts. The man suffering from delirium tremens does see rats and serpents, but is unaware that they are creatures of his own creating, and not of God's creating. If they were the latter, they would be permanent. But there is no consciousness of the self-creation : to the man, they are the facts there, and are never only his consciousness as to what is there. Because, to ignorance, the rapport between facts and consciousness of facts seems immediate ; and the idea never arises that consciousness may misrepresent facts. So, during dream, there is no faintest suspicion that facts may not be as they appear. It requires some real advance in mystical ability before any man thinks of asking questions as to the reality of what he seems to see. External philosophy accepts the apparent 'object,' but examines the rapport between this 'object' and the 'cognising subject.' Mystical philosophy, believing that the apparent

object is itself an explicit of a deeper, spiritual implicit hidden under it, does not accept the apparent object as what is really there; but seeks a new power of 'in-sight' which will show far more than the outer eye can see: the commonest stone blazing like a jewel, and even the glories of sunrise and sunset magnified millions of times.

It is, to me, very significant that the first beginning of evil is—in the story in Genesis—said to have been prefaced by a deep sleep falling upon man. Sleep brings about unconsciousness of actual environment; and—in the absence of vision of the real—the imagination comes creatively into play, and forms ideas for us, and a new world arises, not of God's creating, but of our own, and yet without any awareness of the fact. In Adam's new world, woman seemed to be by his side, instead of within him. Yet this was a very minor fall, compared with the one which followed. The *one* had now become *two*, but the two stood yet in a perceived unity: the duality was made visible to outer sight, but the two had not yet become contraries, they remained complementaries.

But in the deeper fall, this greater change took place. In this story we have the three ideas of, (a) a one so immediate and complete that no idea of a duality in unity could arise (b) the duality manifested, but the two

elements so held in unity that the sense of oneness was not lost: and (c) the duality now cognised as made up of two contraries, each with an own personal 'self,' between whose separate interests there was more apparent difference than oneness. This deeper fall is called, not sleep, but 'death': and it was said, "In the day you so separate the self-interests of the 'two,' you shall surely die": that is, you shall enter, not into a temporary oblivion of the 'one,' as in sleep; but into what will seem to you like a total and permanent oblivion, in which all direct consciousness of complementariness will be lost in a hard and fast persuasion of contrariety.

Thus, I would suggest, the world of our present 'fact' arose: and it was no counter-creation by God of a positive evil thing, to be the needed experience of a contrary; for it exists nowhere but in the false imagination, though to that, it seems as real and actual as the true world will seem to us when we recover the lost cognising faculties. A false imagination of evil effects all that is requisite.

Now Boehme ever maintains that the right operation for the elimination of evil, which he calls 'regeneration,' is to reverse the process of the fall into evil. The world does not see this: and hopes to bring about better conditions by external operation on the false imagination; touching

it up here and there, seeking to restrain its worst and most disastrous results; and—by making laws of the game—trying to put on the works of the true imagination without destroying the false. The world knows well enough what the unrestrained florescence of the spirit of competition for things of limited supply would be; but it hopes to restrain this full florescence; and the power it relies on most to effect this restraint is force. When our Lord said, "Ye must be born again," He was but contradicting this false hope of the world, and asserting that nothing but the death of the false would produce the resurrection of the true. Is it not plain then that the world needs the mystic to indicate to it the only hopeful operation, whereby old things can pass away and all things become new?

And it is easy to see that we should reach the same practical conclusion if we were to reverse the apprehensions of the mind of the flesh. For then, for 'death,' we should read 'life'; for 'loss,' 'gain'; and so on. And if we were asked how death and loss *could* be taken for life and gain, we should have to say that this inversion could only take place in a false imagination.

If these things are so, then it is plain that the task before all who would take part in finding a remedy for the evils of the world is to persuade the world that it does stand

in a false imagination, and that nothing will bring any satisfactory amendment but a letting go of all its strongest assurances, and accepting their contraries. But it is as certain as can be that this will not be effected by talk alone, nor by any amount of clever theorising or argument. These things have their place and part, no doubt; but more than these is needed.

Now the Church was meant to be a society, enacting before the world the truths of the actual Fact, maintaining those spiritual implicits on which such action is based, and showing how much better a state of things results from the inversion of the ordinary notions of the world. It is no doubt the easiest of things to criticise the Church adversely, for it has very obviously failed of its true mission; it is largely leavened by the spirit of that world which it exists to negate; it has mistaken its explicits for implicits; and laid more consequence on formal profession than on inner spirit. Nevertheless, I must claim some points in its favour. First it has witnessed to the world that any attempt to weaken the influence of the false imagination requires an *organised* effort; and that this effort must be worked on a basis of brotherly relation, before which distinctions in knowledge, to say nothing of distinctions of class, must be disallowed. Next, it has kept from total submergence certain great implicits; and

though it has rather preserved them, than rightly interpreted and understood them, yet this at least is something. Are men of intelligence going to maintain that failure spells death, and that an organisation which shows signs of having misunderstood its mission is not worth being helped to do better ?

To me, the most disastrous mistake of the Church is its failure to understand, and respond to, the present demand for more advanced teaching; for thought, and penetrative thought; for a resolute and capable effort to dive into those 'mysteries,' which itself professes to be the rightful study of its Clergy as the ministers and stewards thereof. But let us not forget how it has come about that, within the Church itself, there is no great demand for such teaching. This is because all those who are capable of feeling the need for it, have gone out from the Church; whereby it has been left to its more conservative and unprogressive members. And why has this taken place? I venture to guess that it is because so many have ceased to admit that they have any responsibility for the backward brethren, and prefer to speculate about things occult and recondite, rather than help in the practical work of winning the backward to a higher apprehension. And I say that if the Church has thought more of the backward than of

the advanced—who are better able to take care of themselves, it has been no doubt an error, but a not altogether unforgiveable one; and one that could very easily be repaired.

And I do not think that many who have left the Church for more particular societies, formed to study wisdom pure and simple, realise the danger which comes when we associate only to talk and discuss, and not to do practical work. Ever the one safe test of theory is practice. For the sole virtue of truth is its good, as Swedenborg so constantly affirmed; and while the most far-fetched and wild speculations can delight the curious, they might be found empty and vain if they were once applied as a practical remedy for the world's needs. The Church has erred, and wandered far from its real aim; but many outside it, who scorn it for its prosaic conservatism, err equally, in that they are taking no part in the great effort to regenerate the world, and will not stand shoulder to shoulder with that small minority in the Church—small because of their defection—who are now vainly trying to arouse it to its real mission, and to get rid of that narrow-mindedness and bigotry which a strong conservative majority always implies and produces.

I have the best of reasons for knowing what will be the reply to this: it has been told to me in many letters from friends who

are highly developed on the intellectual side, but—as I cannot but think—not so highly on the spiritual. No one can do anything: the Church is shut up hard and fast in its inane system: it stands in horror of the very name, ‘mysticism’: its doctrines are all effete, and have been utterly discredited by advancing scientific knowledge: it is divided into parties of extreme High and Low, each of which deny salvation to the other. What do I think of the E.C.U. carrying by acclamation a vote of censure on the Bishop of Hereford for proposing to admit Dissenters to Holy Communion? I admit all this, and more, and say it is deeply to be regretted: but how are you going to remedy this by staying outside and shouting against it? I say that the Bishop of Hereford has not yet been kicked out of the Church, and till his enemies can do this, their opinion against him does not amount to a paper of pins. I bring forward the case of our Chairman, a dignitary of the Church, and a man of truly progressive views, with a large following. I say that ever *narrowness makes the most noise*; and that there are still the seven thousand in the Church who are eager to see things bettered: and that in spite of the many symptoms which darken the diagnosis, and seem evidences that the whole system is moribund, there’s life in the old dog yet! *Unless* those who might

help refuse to help, or think that the only help needed is to subscribe for a coffin.

And this too should be said with emphasis: that if you—in your superior wisdom—abandon the Church, and let it drivel on in what Mr. Lathom called its ‘sacerdotage,’ and it becomes useless for all practical purposes; *you* will have to start another institution with the same aims. For if you shut yourselves up in little, private societies, pursuing theoretical interests instead of practical operation, the world, left to itself, will soon invade those oases. Only weeds grow without cultivation; and not everything thought to be adequate to restrain selfishness proves really adequate. A gospel adequate for such as are alert and interested may be quite inadequate for such as are neither, and hate to be told of any necessity for self-restraint. If you reject the gospel of Christ as interpreted by what I consider sound Christian mysticism, I see not what you have to fall back on but the gospel of India, or the gospel of altruistic and ethical intellectualism. Both appeal rather to the cultured than to the uncultured; and a wisdom without power will be found inadequate in the day of our sore need.

Several things ought to be heedfully weighed. First, attacking forces do not always realise how much of their apparent strength depends on the strength of the enemy, which

unites them. Once that strength is finally overthrown, they may break up into a divergence of teaching far exceeding the divergence in the Church, great as that is now. All gospels that are real gospels have a common foe, the unrestrained selfishness of the ignorant and brutal. Therefore it is always madness to dispute about *species* differences, lest the real, *generic* difference arise to power and sweep the *species* victor away. Secondly, should you ever find it necessary to commence real missionary effort against the force of selfishness, you will have to introduce symbols and explicit of spiritual truths, or you will never so much as bring them within the horizon of the uncultured you will wish to teach. For it is not enough to be prepared to teach wisdom to those who desire to learn it: you will have to go to the ignorant, and not wait for them to come to you: or they will come to you, not to learn, but to destroy. The advanced may be able to do without symbols and external forms; but not so the backward. The Church is an ancient institution, founded in the past on lines of divine illumination. And though it has largely lost the illumination, it has preserved the lines; and—unless history lies—it has, in the past, proved itself a power able to restrain to some extent the unruly wills and affections of sinful men. I venture to doubt whether—

clever as we have grown about things which are quite outside these lines—we shall be now able to devise better. And I think that to throw this institution over board, instead of endeavouring to reform it, is a wicked waste of a sort of power, not perhaps ideal from the advanced man's point of view, but admirably designed to be just that power which all abstract philosophy lacks, a telling appeal to those it is most necessary to work on; and who can only be got *to think an unwonted thought through the doing of some act which suggests it.*

I only venture to speak thus strongly because—as I said at the first—I am a nobody whom no one need mind. What I please to think matters nothing—unless it chances to be true. Banish God, personal in man, human in man (because true humanity is true divinity), and appealing to all healthy loves and intuitions of undegraded human nature, in favour of a God impersonal, far off, who has never cared to reveal Himself to His creatures, but left them to blunder after Him as best they can; so that the first speculation must be—for many—whether there is anything to speculate about, and see how this will act when you set a theoretical ‘perchance’ against a powerful, natural love, better called ‘lust.’ If righteousness is not the will of God, not the true nature of man, but only the will of the *elite*,

and recommended because it seems right in your eyes, then how are you going to make it the will of the degraded unless you first make them all of the *elite*? If its only sanction is your preference, or your perception that it works best, what are you going to reply to those who say that their preference leans, and their perception tends, to a contrary conclusion?

Not so much knowledge, as power, is what we want just now. The Jew, says St. Paul, sought for power without wisdom; and the Greek, for wisdom without power: so do all who stand in the division of the divine unity, which is both wisdom and power. The power of Christ is that He does not preach impersonality, but the true, real divine personality of the universal Self. It is one thing to go about not doing evil and quite another to go about doing good. Since all men seek 'good,' how can you persuade them better than by saying, "Quite right: but let the good be real and lasting." I do not see how to evade the conclusion that the end must be a practical *return to the beginning*: and if you trace man's beginning to a mist, or to a monkey, how do you help him to love and desire a noble personality?

For this is the only thing really worth doing; and to succeed in doing it would save any nation, and with all nations, the whole world. To get back, out of the contrariety,

into the complementariness, would solve all our problems; change war into brotherhood, lust into love, and fraud into integrity.

Always faith moves mountains. Let us, for the moment, suppose the apparently impossible accomplished. Suppose that we had a Church, an external organisation, which existed to unite all who wished to fight selfishness in every form and phase, and considered this bond of union stronger than individual differences about details. Within it should be found, exercised in perfect freedom, every sort of form of worship or of aspiration, from that of a God, real, but unknown (but not unknowable), up to the highest ritual and the deepest sacramentalism; and none—while they remain true to the basal principle of preferring the service of the brethren to the pushing of private interests—thought unworthy, or of less esteem, because of the form, or absense of it, which they preferred to adopt. Let us imagine that all within it recognised that so long as men are raised to the highest of which they are capable, it matters little, comparatively speaking, in what *words* we define this highest, because the *thing* is always more important than the *name* of it. Also, because those who believe in God are sure that He must in the end become known to all whose will is to do His will, even though they may not, for the moment, clearly know Him whose

will it is. Within this Church, the one thing forbidden, the only line drawn, is *acceptance of any creed which fosters selfishness*; for that is idolatry: the one thing God forbids; always the worship of my self, instead of Him. Let us suppose that at all gatherings for worship, or for discussion, the one thing advocated was negation of 'self,' and a deeper understanding of God, life, brotherliness and all graciousness, call it what you will. That the simple man who wants to be brotherly is not despised by the learned, who is now learned enough to be able to see the potentiality behind the present and surface disability, and strives to become himself a child that he may the better teach children. The simple, too, feel that the simplicity of the gospel is the simplicity of any great attainment to him who has thoroughly mastered it. And no interference with any legitimate freedom of thought is ever contemplated, for the one thing forbidden is thought which drags men down to the beasts, instead of lifting them up to the Angels.

In this Church, some might say, "Jesus Christ is the highest ideal. Know His life well, and strive to imitate His spirit: and be sure that He is more than an ideal: a Being who loves all the creatures He has made; and able to give you power to do what else might be too hard for you. Nothing

shuts you off from this power but lack of desire to receive it, and refusal to put yourselves in the way of receiving it. To help you, here are solemn and sacred acts, which have been practised by your fathers for thousands of years. The act is nothing; but what the act can help you to realise is everything. Truly all substance is sacred; for earthly matter is the divine seen under a veil, which puts the divine out of manifestation, into a hiddenness. But as the child has to read first from one book in order to learn to read all books, so the special elements—water, bread and wine—are meant to teach the universal consecration of all earthly substance; and are truly outward and visible signs of an inward and spiritual grace. And just as the sacramental elements reveal the hidden Fact that all substance is really the One Pure Element, so does Christ reveal to us that we are so really divine that He is not ashamed to call us brethren; though we are fallen into a dream that we are quite the reverse of divine, and have personal, 'own self' interests which are contrary to, instead of complementary with, the interests of others; whereby I put my 'I' into the place which is properly God's. Christ came to reveal to us Who should stand in this place; and we all are as is our centre; infinite, if the Infinite stands there; finite,

if the finite."

On the other hand it might be said in other assemblies: "Man is a mysterious union of small and great, of meanness and heroism, of ignorance and knowledge. He is set in a progress—if you will, an evolution; and long ago was far less advanced than now. But great as has been his progress on that side of his nature which opens naturally—his intellectual mind, and wonderful as have been his discoveries as to what he can do, unfortunately progress in all the finer and nobler virtues has not been correspondingly great; and we are not as clear as to what we *are*, as about what we *can do*. Let us henceforth make more serious and earnest effort to advance in moral self-developement, and discover our potentialities in this direction. Something in the heart witnesses that the noblest virtue is Love: let us cultivate all which would make the world happier and better and sweeter for all men; seeking to repress the 'own self' spirit, and to develop the grand and universal Self spirit which feels with, and in, and for all men; and esteems it more blessed to help than to harm, to give than to take away. Possibly we may thus discover in ourselves powers which exceed in practical usefulness all that has been hitherto discovered in nature. For man can be no less worth studying than nature, over which he evidently possesses such

wonderful power."

Personally, I would admit brotherhood with any man who would speak thus: telling him plainly that I think he lacks a power which Christianity possesses; but at the same time admitting that this is a very good beginning, and sure to lead to more. And I am as sure as I am of anything that God will accept such a cup of cold water: for the Infinite does not stand upon points of etiquette, and refuse His help because the applicant does not use the exactly right words, or has not on the right dress, or approach in the particular way. He looks only for something in the heart akin to His spirit. The only unforgivable sin is to think selfishness compatible with holiness, to stand practically in the reversal of the divine character: and it is far better to say not, and do; than to say, and do not.

And this certainly is true. Supposing, for the sake of argument, that there were such a Being as Christian mysticism predicates, an infinite, personal Father, out of whom we all have come, and personal, not with the small, mean, limited personality which we first know, and cling to as our all, but vaster, universal, not reversing ours as 'nothing' reverses 'something,' but as 'everything' reverses 'something'; such a Being would be the best and strongest and most practical power of

unifying our contrarieties. For it is clear that what we need is a new centre. I think there can be but two centres to choose between, one particular, the other universal; and though the universal may be to the consciousness of the particular as nothing is to something, it does not follow that it is thus *to itself*; for 'everything' is as truly a logical contrary to 'something' as is 'nothing': far more so really, for 'nothing' cannot Be. That which is nothing to the false imagination may be everything to the true. The regeneration of the world consists not in teaching it to do nothing, but to do righteousness.

Brotherhood in external interest is not sufficient to unite all men; for a band of thieves may call themselves a band of brothers. The sole power of indissoluble union is the idea of common Fatherhood in God which brotherhood requires and implies. You see the two arches of some huge gateway rising gradually higher and higher; the one curving to the right the other, to the left. They seem contraries; and the thought might arise, "They are going to try which can push the other down, and remain standing alone." Not till the key-stone is in its place may an ignorant person catch the idea of how two contrary pushes, centred in the key-stone find in it their unification, and mean firmness and establishment, and make the apparent contrarieties *one*.

So is the idea of the common Fatherhood as a key-stone to all apparent contrarieties of clashing interests. *Whose* will is to be done? Each of us shrieks, "Mine, mine." The world is in a turmoil, while 'I' seek to force, or trick, all who wish to give effect to their wills to yield place to mine. Then from somewhere deep within us all comes the still, small Voice: "Children, ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of, because ye have forgotten your Father: never can ye make your each particular wills one; never yet came true peace and good-will of force or fraud, which stand in your limited strength and not in My infinite strength. Cast off then the false imagination, which veils Me and reveals your smaller 'self,' and enter into My Nature and My will, which wills the best and highest for you all."

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27 p. ; 21 cm.

At head of title: Proceedings of
Seekers in council.

Cover title.

1. Christianity--Essence, genius,
nature. 2. Mysticism. I. Title II
Title: Proceedings of Seekers in
council.

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Eighth year of publication commences May, 1912.

THE SEEKER.

Quarterly Magazine of Christian Mysticism.

EDITED BY THE

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